

Office Action Summary

Application No. 08/953,477	Applicant(s) Kara, Salim G. et al.
Examiner Joseph Pokrzywa	Group Art Unit 2722

Responsive to communication(s) filed on Jan 10, 2000

This action is FINAL.

Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claims

Claim(s) 1-28, 31-78, and 80-90 is/are pending in the application.

Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

Claim(s) 1-28, 31-78, and 80-90 is/are rejected.

Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

Claims _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.

The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is approved disapproved.

The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

All Some* None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been received.

received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____.

received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____.

Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

Notice of References Cited, PTO-892

Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). 8

Interview Summary, PTO-413

Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948

Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--- SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ---

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DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Applicant's amendment was received on 1/10/00, and has been entered and made of record. Currently, claims 1 through 28, 31 through 78, and 80 through 90 are pending.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments, filed 1/10/00, with respect to amended claims 1, 27, and 57 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

3. Applicant's arguments, filed 1/10/00, with respect to original independent claim 32, and independent claim 75 with dependent claim 79 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

4. In response to the applicants argument on page 19, regarding the rejection of claim 32 as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent Number 5,826,034) in view of Maxwell (U.S. Patent number 5,805,810), stating that the motivation provided by the examiner is improper, as the motivation must establish the desirability for making the modification. The examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 19880; *In re*

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Jones, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the suggestion, or motivation to combine the references is in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art *with* the ease of modification to Albal's system. Albal and Maxwell have similar structures and a similar process (a way location converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a third location), therein the references have cumulative features, and one of ordinary skill in the art can recognize that the teachings of a secondary reference can be used in that of a primary reference when the systems are solving similar problems, using similar features. Therefore, the motivation can be seen as the ease of modification of Albal's system with that of Maxwell's teachings due to the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, as Albal and Maxwell are solving similar problems, using similar features.

Therefore, the rejection to claim 32 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Albal in view of Maxwell, and the corresponding dependent claims are repeated in this Office action.

5. In response to the applicants argument on pages 20 and 21, regarding the rejection of original claim 79 (now being incorporated into amended claim 75) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent Number 5,826,034) in view of Maxwell (U.S. Patent number 5,805,810), stating that Maxwell fails to teach of the prepayment being deducted from a credit register stored at a first location. The examiner notes the limitation of original claim 79, "said value information includes an indicia of credit deducted from a credit storage device coupled to said transmitting

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means." As stated in the claim, the credit storage device of Maxwell (sender database 1300) is *coupled* to the transmitting means (column 14, lines 1 through 17, and as mentioned by applicant on page 20, lines 28 through 31 of the amendment).

6. Further, in response to the applicants argument on page 21, stating that the motivation provided by the examiner is improper, as the motivation must establish the desirability for making the modification. As discussed above, the suggestion, or motivation to combine the references is in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art *with* the ease of modification to Albal's system. Albal and Maxwell have similar structures and a similar process (a way location converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a third location), therein the references have cumulative features, and one of ordinary skill in the art can recognize that the teachings of a secondary reference can be used in that of a primary reference when the systems are solving similar problems, using similar features. Therefore, the motivation can be seen as the ease of modification of Albal's system with that of Maxwell's teachings due to the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, as Albal and Maxwell are solving similar problems, using similar features.

Therefore, the limitations of claim 79 (now being incorporated into independent claim 75) remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Albal in view of Maxwell.

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Information Disclosure Statement

7. The references listed in the Information Disclosure Statement submitted on 1/26/00 have been considered by the examiner (see attached PTO-1449).

Claim Objections

8. **Claim 80** is objected to because of the following informalities:

in **claim 80**, line 1, "The system of claim 79" should be changed to "The system of claim 75", as claim 79 was canceled by the amendment.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

9. **Claims 57 through 74, and 90** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

10. **Claim 57** recites the limitation "said transmitting means" in line 6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

11. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

12. **Claims 1, 3 through 7, 12 through 19, 21 through 26, and 86 through 89 are rejected** under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent Number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Harkins *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,514,126).

Regarding *claim 1*, Albal discloses a system for transmitting a document from a first location (workstation 30, shown in Fig. 1, and Figs. 5 through 9) to a second location (workstations 36 and 46, and fax 44, shown in Fig. 1, and workstation 36, shown in Figs. 5 through 9) through a disinterested third location (payload delivery system 62, column 6, lines 33 through 60), wherein the system comprises a means for selecting the third location discrete from the first location and the second location (column 3, lines 11 through 52, specifically lines 31 through 48, where the input manager selects a remote server location), with the third location being associated with a party disinterested in the transmitted document (column 6, lines 33 through 60), wherein selection of the third location by the selecting means is at least in part determined (column 3, lines 20 through 49) through reference to a document transmitting attribute (column 8, lines 34 through 41) selected from the group consisting of proximity of the

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third location to the second location (column 9, lines 38 through 64), association of the third location with the first location (the appropriate server being connected in the network, see Fig. 1, and column 6, lines 49 through 60), and a proper third location to handle a particular document being transmitted (column 3, lines 31 through 52). Further, Albal discloses of a means at least in part operable at the first location for transmitting a document to the third location (column 3, lines 24 through 39, and column 9, lines 38 through 41), a means at least in part operable at the third location for receiving the document transmitted by the transmitting means (column 3, line 60 through column 4, line 5), wherein the received document is in electronic form after receipt at the third location (column 4, lines 25 through 31), a means at least in part operable at the third location for producing a confirmation receipt at the third location (see Figs. 5 through 9, near-end acknowledgment 120, and column 4, lines 6 through 20), and a means in part operable at the third location for reproducing for delivery to the second location the received electronic document in a plurality of different formats (column 8, lines 28 through 52).

Continuing, Albal teaches of a particular format of the formats utilized for delivery is preselected and stored in a database (column 8, lines 34 through 41, wherein the recipient specific information is chosen and stored, so as to let a communication be sent by a sender merely selecting a recipient name from the database, see column 8, lines 44 through 52). However, Albal is unclear if a particular format of the formats utilized in reproduction for delivery are preselected *by an intended recipient of the document*. Harkins teaches of a system for transmitting a document from a first location to a second location through a disinterested third location

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(communication channel admin server 105, see column 11, lines 6 through 11), which includes a means in part operable at the third location for reproducing for delivery to the second location the received electronic document in a plurality of different formats (column 7, lines 48 through 52, and column 8, lines 4 through 54), wherein a particular format of the formats utilized in reproduction for delivery are preselected by an intended recipient of the document (column 8, lines 29 through column 9, line 60). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Harkins teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system would become more user friendly if modified to include Harkins teachings, as the transmitted document would take the form most desired by the recipient.

Regarding *claim 3*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of the receiving means comprises a means for accepting documents transmitted in humanly readable tangible form (column 8, lines 41 through 44, and column 9, lines 43 through 64), and a means for accepting documents transmitted in machine readable electronic form (column 8, lines 28 through 52).

Regarding *claim 4*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 3, and Albal further teaches of the received document is selected from a group consisting of a printed document (column 4, lines 30 and 31, wherein a printed document is typically sent by a standard facsimile machine, such as fax 44), a fax transmission (column 4, lines 30 and 31), and an email transmission (column 4, lines 30 and 31).

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Regarding ***claim 5***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of the transmitting means is selected from the group consisting of a general purpose computer operating under control of a general purpose electronic mail application, a general purpose computer operating in combination with an intermediary communication server, a general purpose computer operating under control of a special purpose application adapted specifically for the system, and a facsimile transmission device (see Fig. 1, and column 6, line 25 through column 7, line 20).

Regarding ***claim 6***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of the transmitting means comprises a means for communicating additional information with the transmitted document (column 8, lines 28 through 52, and column 9, lines 38 through 41).

Regarding ***claim 7***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 6, and Albal further teaches of the additional information comprises an indication of payment for the service of transmitting the document (column 8, line 66 through column 9, line 3).

Regarding ***claim 12***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 6, and Albal further teaches of the additional information comprises instructions regarding the delivery of the transmitted document to the second location (column 8, lines 28 through 66).

Regarding ***claim 13***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 6, and Albal further teaches of the additional information comprises instructions regarding storage of

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a copy of the transmitted document by the receiving means (column 8, line 28 through column 9, line 3).

Regarding *claim 14*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of the reproducing means comprises a means for formatting the received document according to a predetermined protocol for delivery to the second location (column 8, lines 34 through 41).

Regarding *claim 15*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of the reproducing means comprises a means for reproducing the received document as a physical document to be physically delivered to the second location (column 8, lines 41 through 44, and column 9, lines 43 through 64), and a means for reproducing the received document as a properly formatted electronic document to be electronically delivered to the second location (column 8, lines 34 through 37).

Regarding *claim 16*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 15, and Albal further teaches of the electronic document reproduced as a physical document is delivered to the second location through the disinterested party's established predefined routes for document delivery (column 9, lines 43 through 64).

Regarding *claim 17*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of the reproducing means comprises a document printer operating under control of the disinterested party (column 9, lines 43 through 51, wherein a fax machine inherently includes a printer).

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Regarding ***claim 18***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 17, and Albal further teaches of the document printer is disposed at a location other than the second location and wherein delivery of the transmitted document includes physical handling of the reproduced document by the disinterested party (column 9, lines 43 through 64).

Regarding ***claim 19***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 18, and Albal further teaches of the reproducing means comprises a means for reproducing an indicia of authorization to deliver the transmitted document to the second location by the disinterested party (column 8, lines 15 through 18).

Regarding ***claim 21***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 18, and Albal further teaches of the receiving means further comprises a means for determining an address of the second location from information transmitted by the transmitting means (column 3, lines 31 through 44, and column 8, lines 28 through 52).

Regarding ***claim 22***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 21, and Albal further teaches of the reproducing means comprises a means for preparing a delivery container suitable for use in delivering the transmitted document, the prepared delivery container including the determined address (column 9, lines 55 through 64).

Regarding ***claim 23***, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 17, and Albal further teaches of the document printer is disposed at the second location (fax-print number, column 8, lines 48 through 52).

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Regarding *claim 24*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of the reproducing means comprises a means for determining a particular method of delivery of the received document to the second location, and a means for reproducing the received document according to the determination made by the determining means (column 3, lines 20 through 63).

Regarding *claim 25*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 24, and Albal further teaches of the determining means comprises a database of preferred delivery methods associating the particular method of delivery with at least one of a sender of the received document and an intended recipient of the received document (column 8, lines 34 through 52).

Regarding *claim 26*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, and Albal further teaches of a means operable at least in part at the third location for sorting a plurality of transmitting documents, including the transmitted document according to a criteria selected from the group consisting of a delivery route, a recipient, a class of delivery and a sender (column 8, lines 6 through 23).

Regarding *claim 86*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 24, and Albal further teaches of the determining means comprises a database designating at least one of certain types of documents and particular senders for which document delivery is to be forgone (column 8, lines 34 through 52).

Regarding *claim 87*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 24, and Harkins further teaches of a determining means (channel access control, column 9, line 62

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through column 10, line 54) comprising a database of preferred delivery methods selected by document recipients (receiver profiles stored in disk 106, column 8, line 29 through column 9, line 60). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Harkins teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system would become more user friendly if modified to include Harkins teachings, as the transmitted document would take the form most desired by the recipient.

Regarding *claim 88*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 87, and Harkins further teaches of the database includes identity of senders for which the particular delivery method is used (column 9, line 62 through column 10, line 14, and column 10, lines 38 through 54). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Harkins teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system would become more user friendly if modified to include Harkins teachings, as the transmitted document would take the form most desired by the recipient.

Regarding *claim 89*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 87, and Harkins further teaches of the database includes types of documents for which a particular delivery method is to be used (column 10, lines 38 through 54). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Harkins teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system would become more user friendly if modified to include Harkins teachings, as the transmitted document would take the form most desired by the recipient.

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13. **Claim 2** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent Number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Harkins *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,513,126), and further in view Garson *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,689,550, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99).

Regarding *claim 2*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 1, but fail to teach of the transmission means comprises a means for time stamping the transmitted document according to a secure real time clock in communication with the transmitting means. Garson discloses a system of transmitting a message in one format from a first location (remote sites 310 a-d) to a second location (remote sites 310a-d) through a third location (see Fig. 3, network management site 350), which converts the message into a different format, and includes a means for time stamping the transmitted document according to a secure real time clock in communication with the transmitting means (column 10, lines 1 through 3). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Garson's teachings in Albal and Harkins' system. Albal and Harkins' system could easily be modified to include Garson's teachings, as the systems all share cumulative features.

14. **Claims 8 through 11** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Harkins *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,513,126), and further in view of Maxwell (U.S. Patent Number 5,805,810, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99).

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Regarding *claim 8*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 7, but fail to teach if the confirmation producing means is inoperable until the indication of payment is validated. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a third location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Further, Maxwell teaches of a confirmation producing means (message validator 22) which is inoperable until the indication of payment is validated (column 9, line 31 through column 10, line 42). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal and Harkins' system. Albal and Harkins' system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the systems all share cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 9*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 7, but fail to teach if the indication of payment is an indicia of pre-payment deducted from a credit storage device coupled to the transmitting means, the indicia being transmitted to the receiving means accompanying the transmitted document. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a third location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Further, Maxwell teaches of payment is an indicia of pre-payment deducted from a credit storage device coupled to the transmitting means, the indicia being transmitted to the receiving means accompanying the transmitted document (column 9, lines 6 through 11, and lines 19 through 30). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include

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Maxwell's teachings in Albal and Harkins' system. Albal and Harkins' system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the systems all share cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 10*, Albal, Harkins, and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 9, and Maxwell further teaches of the credit storage device includes an internal time device and the transmitted document includes time information provided by the internal time device (column 11, lines 13 through 32). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's further teachings in Albal and Harkins' system. Albal and Harkins' system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the systems all share cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 11*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 7, but fail to teach if the indication of payment is authorization to fund the transmission from an account established external to the transmitting means. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a third location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Maxwell further teaches of the indication of payment is authorization to fund the transmission from an account established external to the transmitting means (column 9, lines 6 through 47). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal and Harkins' system. Albal and Harkins' system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the systems all share cumulative features.

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15. **Claim 20** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent Number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Harkins *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,514,126), and further in view of Kuzma (U.S. Patent Number 5,771,289, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99).

Regarding *claim 20*, Albal and Harkins disclose the system discussed above in claim 19, but fail to teach of the indicia comprises a postage meter stamp. Kuzma discloses a system of sending messages electronically, wherein reproduced indicia of authorization to deliver a document comprises a postage meter stamp (column 3, lines 17 through 44). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Kuzma's teachings in Albal and Harkins' system. Albal's system could be easily modified to include Kuzma's teachings, as using a postage meter stamp is a well known practice in pre-payment and authorization of mail.

16. **Claims 27, 28, and 31** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent Number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Cordery et al. (U.S. Patent Number 5,454,038, cited in the Information Disclosure Statement dated 1/26/00).

Regarding *claim 27*, Albal discloses a system for transmitting a document from a first location (workstation 30, shown in Fig. 1, and Figs. 5 through 9) to a second location (workstations 36 and 46, and fax 44, shown in Fig. 1, and workstation 36, shown in Figs. 5

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through 9) through a disinterested third location (payload delivery system 62, being located in various locations, column 6, lines 33 through 48), wherein the system comprises a means for selecting the third location (column 3, lines 11 through 52, specifically lines 31 through 48, where the input manager selects a remote server location) discrete from the first location and the second location (see Fig. 1), wherein the third location is associated with a party disinterested in the transmitted document (column 8, lines 41 through 44). Further, Albal discloses of a means at least in part operable at the first location for transmitting a document (column 9, lines 37 through 41) and authentication information (column 3, lines 3 through 44) to the third location, a means at least in part operable at the third location for receiving the document (column 9, lines 41 through 43) and authentication information (column 8, lines 6 through 18) transmitted by the transmitting means, wherein the received document is in electronic form after receipt at the third location (column 4, lines 25 through 43), a means at least in part operable at the third location for producing a confirmation receipt at the third location (see Figs. 5 through 9, near-end acknowledgment 120), and a means in part operable at the third location for reproducing for delivery to the second location the received electronic document in a plurality of different formats (column 8, lines 28 through 52).

However, Albal fails to teach of the authentication information includes information with respect to pre-payment for transmission of the transmitted document deducted from a credit register stored at the first location. Cordery discloses a system wherein a third location (Post Office 114) verifies pre-payment for transmission of the transmitted document through reference

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to an authentication information (column 8, lines 3 through 31). Further, Cordery teaches of the pre-payment is deducted from a credit register (account data information stored in the storage device 115) stored at the first location (column 7, lines 1 through 8, and lines 59 through 61, along with Fig. 1, and column 4, lines 8 through 15). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Cordery's teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could be easily include Cordery's teachings, as using digital tokens is a well known practice in pre-payment and authorization of mail, wherein the digital tokens authenticate and add a postage value to mail pieces, adding to the security of the system, as well as the becoming more user friendly.

Regarding *claim 28*, Albal and Cordery disclose the system discussed in claim 27 above, and Cordery further teaches of a third location (Post Office 114) verifies pre-payment for transmission of the transmitted document through reference to an authentication information (column 8, lines 3 through 31). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Cordery's teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could be easily include Cordery's teachings, as using digital tokens is a well known practice in pre-payment and authorization of mail, wherein the digital tokens authenticate and add a postage value to mail pieces, adding to the security of the system, as well as the becoming more user friendly.

Regarding *claim 31*, Albal and Cordery disclose the system discussed in claim 27 above, and Cordery further teaches of a third location (Post Office 114) accounts for payment for

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transmission of the transmitted document through reference to the authentication information (column 7, lines 1 through 61). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Cordery's teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could be easily include Cordery's teachings, as using digital tokens is a well known practice in pre-payment and authorization of mail, wherein the digital tokens authenticate and add a postage value to mail pieces, adding to the security of the system, as well as the becoming more user friendly.

17. **Claims 32, 34 through 56, 75 through 78, and 81 through 85** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Maxwell (U.S. Patent Number 5,805,810, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99).

Regarding *claim 32*, Albal discloses a method for dispatching a document from a sender (workstation 30, shown in Fig. 1, and Figs. 5 through 9) to a selected receiver (workstations 36 and 46, and fax 44, shown in Fig. 1, and workstation 36, shown in Figs. 5 through 9), wherein the method comprises the steps of transmitting the document from the sender (column 9, lines 38 through 41), and receiving the document transmitted by the transmitting step (column 7, lines 21 through 37, and column 9, lines 41 through 47) at a way location (payload delivery system 62, being located in various locations, column 6, lines 33 through 48). Further, the receipt of the electronic document at the way location includes the subsets of reproducing the received

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document according to a selected format of a plurality of formats to be delivered to the receiver (column 4, lines 25 through 31, column 8, lines 28 through 52, and column 9, lines 41 through 64), and producing a confirmation of receipt of the received electronic document confirming receipt at the way location (see Figs. 5 through 9, near-end acknowledgment 120). Continuing, Albal teaches that the sender is typically responsible for the cost of delivery (column 8, line 66 through column 9, line 1), but fails to specifically teach of verifying an indication of pre-payment for the document transmission. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a way location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Further, Maxwell teaches of a step of verifying an indication of pre-payment for the document transmission (column 9, lines 27 through 40). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal's system, thereby including the substep of verifying an indication of pre-payment for the document transmission. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 34*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the receiving step provides the ability to receive a document transmitted by a plurality of different transmitting devices having different communication protocols (column 9, lines 8 through 41).

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Regarding *claim 35*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 34, and Albal further teaches of the transmitted document is a tangible hard copy (column 8, lines 41 through 44, and column 9, lines 43 through 64).

Regarding *claim 36*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 34, and Albal further teaches of the transmitted document is an electronic transmission (column 8, lines 28 through 52).

Regarding *claim 37*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 34, and Albal further teaches of the plurality of different transmitting devices include at least a general purpose computer and a facsimile transmission device (column 8, lines 28 through 52, and in Fig. 1, fax 44 and workstation 46).

Regarding *claim 38*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the selected format of the reproducing substep is a predefined humanly readable format (column 8, lines 28 through 52).

Regarding *claim 39*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the selected format of the reproducing substep is a predefined electronic format (column 8, lines 28 through 52).

Regarding *claim 40*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 39, and Albal further teaches of the preselected electronic format is a facsimile transmission (column 8, line 37).

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Regarding ***claim 41***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 39, and Albal further teaches of the preselected electronic format is an email transmission (column 8, line 37).

Regarding ***claim 42***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the selected format is indicated by information transmitted with the transmitted document (payload entry 102, shown in Fig. 4, column 8, lines 28 through 62, and column 9, lines 38 through 41).

Regarding ***claim 43***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the selected format is indicated through a reference to a database (column 8, lines 34 and 35) associating the particular format with at least one of a sender of the received document and an intended recipient of the received document (see Fig. 4).

Regarding ***claim 44***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the transmitting step utilizes a general purpose computer operating under control of an electronic mail application (column 2, lines 37 through 59, and column 9, lines 8 through 37).

Regarding ***claim 45***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the transmitting step utilizes a general purpose communication device operating in combination with a communication server (see Fig. 1, and column 6, lines 33 through 48).

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Regarding *claim 46*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the transmitting step utilizes a general purpose computer operating under control of a special purpose application adapted specifically for the system (column 6, lines 33 through 60).

Regarding *claim 47*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the transmitting step utilizes a facsimile machine (using fax 44, column 2, lines 37 through 54).

Regarding *claim 48*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Maxwell further teaches of a substep of producing a confirmation of receipt of the received electronic document confirming the receipt at the way location (postage due exception message, column 9, lines 48 through 50, or an accept message, column 10, lines 15 through 42). Further, Maxwell teaches of the confirmation producing substep is not accomplished until the indication of prepayment is verified (column 10, lines 15 through 42). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's further teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 49*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Maxwell further teaches of the indication of prepayment is an indicia of pre-payment deducted from a credit storage device, the indicia being transmitted accompanying the transmitted document (column 9, lines 19 through 47). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of

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ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's further teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 50*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Maxwell further teaches of the indication of pre-payment is provided by a recipient of the transmitted document (column 9, line 19 through column 10, line 4, wherein the recipients credit card is used). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's further teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 51*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of a step of transmitting additional information accompanying the transmission of the document (column 8, lines 28 through 52, and column 9, lines 38 through 41).

Regarding *claim 52*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 51, and Albal further teaches of the additional information comprises instructions regarding delivery of the transmitted document to the receiving location (column 8, line 28 through column 9, line 7).

Regarding *claim 53*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 51, and Albal further teaches of the additional information comprises instructions regarding storage of a copy of the transmitted document at the way location (column 3, lines 33 through 44, and

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column 8, line 28 through column 9, line 7, specifically column 9, lines 1 through 3, wherein a delayed delivery system inherently stores the document for a predetermined time).

Regarding *claim 54*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of a step of determining an address of the recipient location from information included in the electronic document (see Fig. 4, and column 9, lines 38 through 47).

Regarding *claim 55*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, and Albal further teaches of the way location is a physical location discrete from the sender and the receiver (column 6, lines 33 through 48).

Regarding *claim 56*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 55, and Maxwell further teaches of the way location is operated under control of a delivery service disinterested in the sender and the receiver (netgram workstation 16, column 4, lines 16 through 29). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's further teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 75*, Albal discloses a system for transmitting a document from a first location (workstation 30, shown in Fig. 1, and Figs. 5 through 9) for delivery to a second location (workstations 36 and 46, and fax 44, shown in Fig. 1, and workstation 36, shown in Figs. 5 through 9), wherein the system comprises a means for selecting a third location (column 3, lines 11 through 52, specifically lines 31 through 48, where the input manager selects a remote server

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location) discrete from the first location and the second location (payload delivery system 62, being located in various locations, column 6, lines 33 through 48), with selection being based at least in part on a relative position of the third location to one of the first and second locations (located in either of the local servers 28, shown in Fig. 1). Further, Albal discloses of a means at least in part operable at the first location for transmitting a document to the third location (column 3, lines 24 through 39, and column 9, lines 38 through 41), with the transmitting means also transmitting information with respect to a value for delivery of the document (column 8, lines 28 through 66, and column 9, lines 29 through 43), and a means at least in part operable at the third location for receiving the document transmitted by the transmitting means (column 7, lines 21 through 37, and column 9, lines 41 through 43). Albal teaches of the receiving means including a means for receiving electronic document transmissions (column 3, lines 31 through 33), a means for reproducing the received document as a physical document (column 9, lines 38 through 64) and an electronic document to be delivered to the second location (column 8, lines 28 through 52), and a means for producing and transmitting a confirmation of receipt of the received electronic document to the first location (see Figs. 5 through 9, near-end acknowledgment 120).

However, Albal fails to teach if the value information includes an indicia of credit deducted from a credit storage device coupled to the transmitting means. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a third location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Further, Maxwell teaches of payment is an indicia of pre-payment deducted from a credit storage device

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coupled to the transmitting means, the indicia being transmitted to the receiving means accompanying the transmitted document (column 9, lines 6 through 11, and lines 19 through 30). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 76*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 75, and Albal further teaches of the confirmation includes a formation from the group consisting of document transmission information, document sender information, and document recipient information (column 4, lines 55 through 63).

Regarding *claim 77*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 75, and Albal further teaches of the receiving means being adapted to receive documents transmitted from a general purpose computer, an electronic mail system, and a facsimile machine (column 4, lines 30 and 31, and Fig. 1, computer 30, fax 44, and workstations 46).

Regarding *claim 78*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 75, and Maxwell further teaches of a transmission of the confirmation is accomplished subsequent to verification of the value information (column 9, line 31 through column 10, line 42). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

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Regarding ***claim 81***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 75, and Albal further teaches of a means for archiving the document at the third location (column 3, lines 31 through 44, and column 7, lines 65 through 67).

Regarding ***claim 82***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 75, and Albal further teaches of the receiving means comprises a means for determining a physical location of the second location (column 3, lines 31 through 49, and column 9, lines 38 through 64).

Regarding ***claim 83***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 82, and Albal further teaches of the reproduction means comprises a means for preparing a delivery container suitable for use in delivering the reproduced document, the prepared delivery container including the determined address (column 9, lines 49 through 62).

Regarding ***claim 84***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 75, and Albal further teaches of the transmitting means and the receiving means communicate at least in part through a public communication network (column 5, line 58 through column 6, line 24).

Regarding ***claim 85***, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 84, and Albal further teaches of the communication network is selected from the group consisting of a public switched network (column 6, lines 7 through 15), a computer network (see Fig. 1, column 5, lines 58 through 60), and a cable system (column 5, line 60 through column 6, line 6). However, Albal fails to teach of the Internet. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a third location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal

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documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Further, Maxwell teaches of using the Internet as a communication network (column 4, lines 59 through 64). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

18. **Claims 33 and 80** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Maxwell (U.S. Patent Number 5,805,810, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99), and further in view of Garson *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,689,550, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99).

Regarding *claim 33*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the method discussed above in claim 32, but fail to specifically teach of time stamping transmission of the document. Garson discloses a system of transmitting a message in one format from a first location (remote sites 310 a-d) to a second location (remote sites 310a-d) through a way location (see Fig. 3, network management site 350), which converts the message into a different format, and includes a step of time stamping transmission of the document (column 10, lines 1 through 3). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Garson's teachings in Albal and Maxwell's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Garson's teachings, as the systems have cumulative features.

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Regarding *claim 80*, Albal and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 75, but fail to teach of the credit storage device includes a real time clock and the transmission of the document is time stamped according to the real time clock. Garson discloses a system of transmitting a message in one format from a first location (remote sites 310 a-d) to a second location (remote sites 310a-d) through a way location (see Fig. 3, network management site 350), which converts the message into a different format, and includes a step of time stamping transmission of the document (column 10, lines 1 through 3). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Garson's teachings in Albal and Maxwell's system. Albal and Maxwell's system could easily be modified to include Garson's teachings, as the systems have cumulative features.

19. **Claims 57 through 66, 70 through 74, and 90** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Sundsted (U.S. Patent Number 5,999,967), and further in view of Berkowitz *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,903,877, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99).

Regarding *claim 57*, Albal discloses a system for delivering information to a selected location (workstations 36 and 46, and fax 44, shown in Fig. 1, and workstation 36, shown in Figs. 5 through 9) from a transmitting location (workstation 30, shown in Fig. 1, and Figs. 5 through 9), wherein the system comprises a transmission station operable at the transmitting location and

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adapted to transmit the information (column 3, lines 24 through 33) to an intermediate location (payload delivery system 62, being located in various locations, column 6, lines 33 through 48), and an intermediate station operable at the intermediate location (column 6, lines 49 through 60) and adapted to receive the information transmitted (column 6, line 49 through column 7, line 18) by the transmitting means (column 3, lines 31 through 65). Further, the intermediate station comprises a converter circuit (media/protocol converter 88) adapted to electronically receive the transmitted information and to convert the transmission to electronic form (column 7, lines 47 through 59), and a reproducing circuit adapted to reproduce the information in human readable form, wherein the reproducing circuit also produces an indicia authorizing delivery of the human readable information to the selected location (column 9, lines 38 through 64, wherein the seal is produced which authorizes delivery).

However, Albal fails to teach of the reproducing circuit producing an indicia of payment authorizing delivery of the human readable information to the selected location. Sundsted discloses a system which delivers information to a selected location (receiver, see Fig. 2) from a transmitting location (sender, see Fig. 2), wherein an intermediate station (bank, being the third party) comprises a reproducing circuit which produces an indicia of payment authorizing delivery of the human readable information to the selected location (electronic token, see Fig. 5, column 9, line 38 through column 10, line 20). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Sundsted's teachings in Albal's system, thereby having the reproducing circuit producing an indicia of payment (the

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electronic token or stamp) authorizing delivery of the human readable information to the selected location. Albal's system would become more efficient and more automated if modified to incorporate Sundsted's teachings, as the sender or receiver would not have to worry about sending or receiving a bill for the service, as payment is done through the intermediate station.

Continuing, Albal fails to teach of the converter circuit (media/protocol converter 88) being adapted to electronically receive the transmitted information and to convert the transmission to electronic form if the transmitted information is not initially in electronic form. Berkowitz discloses a system which transmits information through a plurality of devices (column 3, lines 52 through 59) to an intermediate device (transaction request server 20), wherein a converter circuit is adapted to electronically receive the transmitted information and to convert the transmission to electronic form if the transmitted information is not initially in electronic form (column 3, line 67 through column 4, line 5). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Berkowitz's teachings in Albal and Sundsted's system. Albal's system could be easily be adapted to include Berkowitz's converter circuit, as the systems share cumulative features, therein making Albal's system easily modifiable to a person of ordinary skill in the art.

Regarding *claim 58*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 57, and Albal further teaches of the intermediate location being selected according to proximity to the selected location (column 3, lines 31 through 49, and column 6, lines 33 through 60).

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Regarding *claim 59*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 58, and Albal further teaches of the intermediate location selection is accomplished automatically by the transmitting location through reference to address information with respect to the selected location (column 3, lines 31 through 49, wherein if the sender workstation contains the first payload delivery system, seen in column 6, lines 49 through 60, then the second payload delivery system is selected through reference to the destination address).

Regarding *claim 60*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 57, and Albal further teaches of the intermediate location is selected according to proximity to the transmitting location (column 3, lines 31 through 49, and column 6, lines 33 through 60).

Regarding *claim 61*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 57, and Albal further teaches of the converter circuit comprises circuitry adapted to accept electronic documents communicated utilizing different communication protocols (column 7, lines 47 through 59).

Regarding *claim 62*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 61, and Albal further teaches of the different communication protocols include at least two protocols selected from the group consisting of a standardized electronic mail communication protocol (column 8, lines 34 through 37), a special purpose mail communication protocol, a standardized facsimile protocol (column 7, lines 34 through 37), a standardized character based protocol, and a standardized packet based protocol.

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Regarding *claim 63*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 57, and Albal further teaches of the converter circuit comprising circuitry adapted to determine delivery address information with respect to the selected location from information contained within the transmitted information (column 7, lines 47 through 59, and column 8, lines 28 through 52).

Regarding *claim 64*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 63, and Albal further teaches of the converter circuit comprising circuitry adapted to verify the accuracy of the delivery address information (column 3, lines 31 through 37).

Regarding *claim 65*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 57, and Albal further teaches of a means for including ancillary information with the transmitted information, wherein the ancillary information being suitable for use by the receiving means in delivery of the transmitted information to the selected location (column 8, lines 28 through 52, and column 9, lines 38 through 47).

Regarding *claim 66*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 65, and Albal further teaches of the ancillary information comprising means for funding delivery of the transmitted information (column 8, line 66 through column 9, line 3).

Regarding *claim 70*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 65, and Albal further teaches of the ancillary information includes a delivery address of the selected location (see Fig. 4, column 8, lines 34 through 52).

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Regarding ***claim 71***, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 70, and Albal further teaches of the converter circuit comprises a means for verifying the accuracy of the delivery address information (column 3, lines 31 through 37).

Regarding ***claim 72***, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 65, and Albal further teaches of the ancillary information includes a time of transmission of the document by the transmitting means (column 9, lines 1 through 3), wherein the time being provided by a secure time piece disposed at the transmitting location (wherein a secured time piece would inherently be used by a workstation).

Regarding ***claim 73***, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 65, and Albal further teaches of the ancillary information includes specific delivery information regarding the delivery of the human readable information, indicating selection of at least one delivery option of a plurality of delivery options available for delivery of the transmitted information (see Fig. 4).

Regarding ***claim 74***, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 57, and Albal further teaches of the reproducing circuit is operable at least in part with corresponding circuitry disposed at the selected location (column 6, line 33 through column 7, line 59).

Regarding ***claim 90***, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 57, and Albal further teaches of the intermediate station further comprising an acknowledgment circuit adapted to produce an acknowledgment of receipt of the transmitted

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information (output manager 84, column 8, lines 24 through 26, and see Figs. 5 through 9, near-end acknowledgment 120, wherein the acknowledgment 120 is produced by a circuit in the near-end server 28).

20. **Claims 67 through 69** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albal (U.S. Patent number 5,826,034, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99) in view of Sundsted (U.S. Patent Number 5,999,967), further in view of Berkowitz *et al.* (U.S. Patent Number 5,903,877, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99), and further in view of Maxwell (U.S. Patent Number 5,805,810, cited in the previous Office action dated 9/14/99).

Regarding *claim 67*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 66, and Albal further teaches of the intermediate station further comprising an acknowledgment circuit adapted to produce an acknowledgment of receipt of the transmitted information (output manager 84, column 8, lines 24 through 26, and see Figs. 5 through 9, near-end acknowledgment 120, wherein the acknowledgment 120 is produced by a circuit in the near-end server 28). However, Albal fails to teach of the acknowledgment circuitry being adapted to transmit the acknowledgment to the transmitting location, wherein the last mentioned portion of the acknowledgment circuit is inactive until the funding means is confirmed. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a way location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Further, Maxwell teaches of transmitting an acknowledgment (exception message or accept message) to

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the transmitting location, wherein the last mentioned portion of the acknowledgment circuit is inactive until the funding means is confirmed. (column 9, line 27 through column 10, lines 42). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz's system, thereby including the acknowledgment circuitry being adapted to transmit the acknowledgment to the transmitting location, wherein the last mentioned portion of the acknowledgment circuit is inactive until the funding means is confirmed. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 68*, Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz disclose the system discussed above in claim 66, but fail to teach if the funding means includes at least a value data packet. Maxwell discloses a system wherein a way location (netgram workstation 16) converts email messages sent from a first location into postal documents to be sent to a second location (see abstract). Further, Maxwell teaches of a funding means which includes at least a value data packet (column 9, lines 19 through 47). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Maxwell's teachings in Albal, Sundsted, and Berkowitz's system. Albal's system could easily be modified to include Maxwell's teachings, as the two systems have cumulative features.

Regarding *claim 69*, Albal, Sundsted, Berkowitz, and Maxwell disclose the system discussed above in claim 68, and Sundsted discloses a system wherein a value is deducted from a credit stored at the transmitting location (column 9, lines 38 through column 10, line 12, wherein

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the history log 32 stores all of the tokens for record keeping purposes, column 6, lines 51 through 53). Therefore, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include Sundsted's further teachings in the combination system of Albal, Sundsted, Berkowitz, and Maxwell. Albal's system would become more efficient and more automated if modified to incorporate Sundsted's teachings, as the sender or receiver would not have to worry about sending or receiving a bill for the service, as payment is done through the intermediate station.

Conclusion

21. Applicant's amendment of independent claims 1, 27, and 57 necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action, along with their corresponding dependent claims. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

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however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

22. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joe Pokrzywa whose telephone number is (703) 305-0146. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward Coles, can be reached on (703) 305-4712. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 306-5406.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3800/4700.

Joseph R. Pokrzywa

March 22, 2000


EDWARD L. COLES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
GROUP 2700